

MORE BIOGRAPHY

BY

E. CLERIHUE BENTLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY

G. K. CHESTERTON

VICTOR REINGANUM

NICOLAS BENTLEY

E. C. BENTLEY

Methuen & Co. Ltd. London

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E. CLERIHEW BENTLEY

AUTHOR OF 'BIOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS',
'TRENT'S LAST CASE', ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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AND
THE AUTHOR



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DEDICATED
TO
THE REV. CYRIL ARGENTINE ALINGTON, D.D.
HEAD MASTER OF ETON
IN TOKEN THAT
ALL IS FORGIVEN

WITHDRAWN
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PREFACE

IN questions relating to the aims, rather than the methods, of Education I have always felt a deep concern ; and I have not failed to ask myself what was to be the outcome of that passionate devotion to Biography which, since the appearance of my earlier text-book, has so largely replaced the enthusiasm for Algebra in our schools. I have weighed my responsibility. My state of mind could not be more happily expressed than in those wonderful words of Keats : ‘ To what green altar, O mysterious priest, lead’st thou that heifer lowing at the skies ? ’

But long reflection having convinced me that the answer to that inquiry is in the affirmative, I have now prepared this collection of additional examples.

Although in a sense I have received no help in the composition of this work, I am not unmindful of what the Stagyrte has observed—that there are those who, merely by living in the same world, support and strengthen us in all we do. I desire, then, to recognize a debt which I can never repay to Mr. Charles Chaplin ; to Mr. Eamonn de Valera ; to Mr. Leslie Henson ; to M. Maurice Rostand ; to General-Quartiermeister Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff ; to Grock ; to the Editor of the *Izvestia* ; and to Felix the Cat. As I contemplate this galaxy, my case reminds me irresistibly of Carlyle’s apostrophe to his Prussian hero : ‘ O Man ! With what tremors as of earth-begettings hast thou not wrought, O Man ! Yet—is it utterly indeed of thee ? Did there not toil in it also that World-Man ’—and so on, and so on.

E. C. BENTLEY

August 1929

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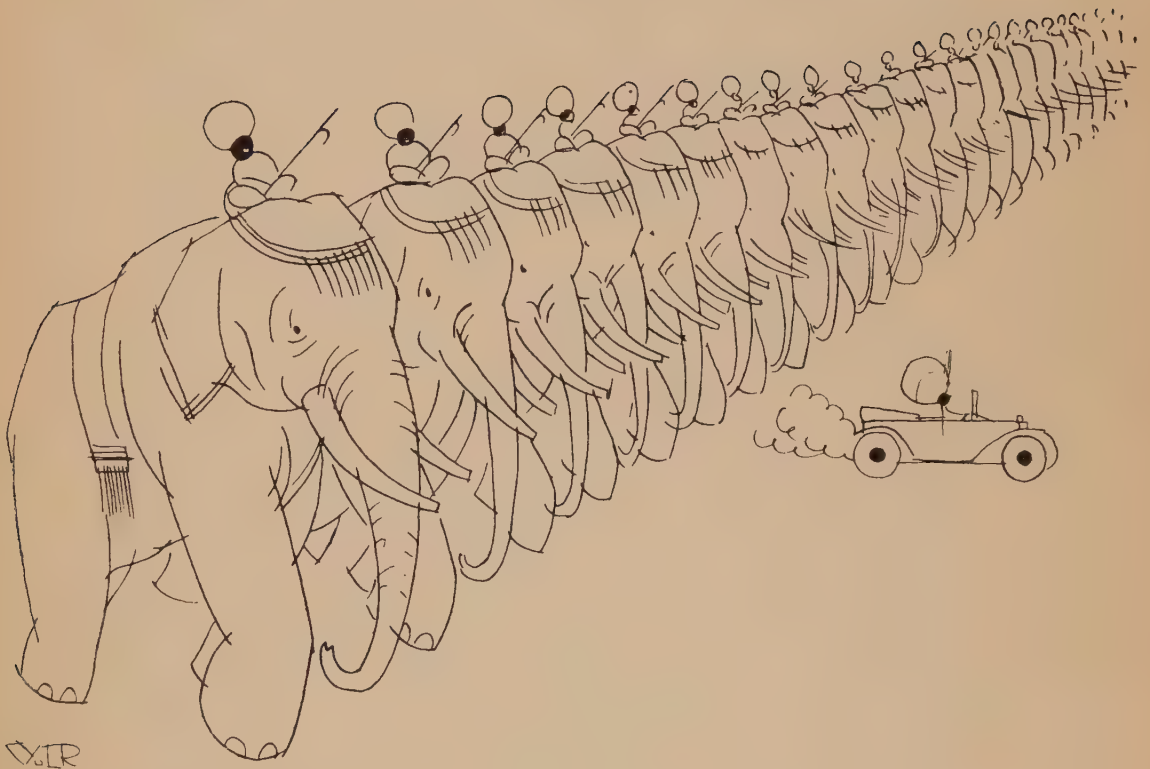
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MORE BIOGRAPHY

George the Third
Ought never to have occurred.
One can only wonder
At so grotesque a blunder.



Of course Ranjitsinhji
Was quite right not to be stingy,
But I never could quite see the relevance
Of his keeping nine thousand elephants.



Mr. Henry Ford
Had a little secret hoard,
To which he would add a dime
From time to time.



18

It was useless to tell a man
So opinionated as Kellermann
That he was absolutely balmy
To think of standing at Valmy.



What if Bishop Creighton
Was descended from a Titan ?
A man I know called Binks
Is descended from the Sphinx.



V. IR

When the Venerable Bede
Wanted to play Juvenile Lead *
They said they would much rather
He took the Heavy Father.

* *'Cur non? Quid si prisca redit venus?'*—
Epistola ad Ecgbertum, §127.



Signor Mussolini
Disliked the name Sweeney.
Anyone bearing it, he said,
Would get a clump on the head.



The digestion of Milton
Was unequal to Stilton.
He was only feeling so-so
When he wrote *Il Penseroso*.



‘ Corruptio optimi pessima ! ’
Grinned Sir Henry Bessemer.
‘ Judicio vulgi demens ! ’
Snorted Sir William Siemens.



That sensitive genius Turner
Simply detested Smyrna.
He said, give him Mozambique
Any day in the week.



Louis the Eleventh
Was contemporary with Henry the Seventh.
I am glad that he
Was not contemporary with me.



Dante Alighieri
Seldom troubled a dairy.
He wrote the *Inferno*
On a bottle of Pernod.



VER

That time when Lord Cecil
Induced Sir Austin to wrestle
Delegates rushed up in a fever
From all over Geneva.



Mr. Noel Coward
Was disillusioned and soured
By the lukewarm reception of his comedy
Introducing a real dromedary.*

* Named Ethel.



The only occasion when Comte
Is known to have romped
Was when the multitude roared, ' Vive
La Philosophie Positive ! '



Few Romans were as tony as
The elegant Petronius.
None who dressed snappier
Appeared on the Via Appia.



(33)

It maddened Dean Inge
To be asked not to sing,*
And there was some savage biting
When they tried to stop him reciting.†

* 'The Gipsy's Warning.'

† 'Zara's Ear-rings.'

How vigilant was Spenser
As a literary censor !
He pointed out that there were too few E's
In Lily's *Euphues*.



When Torquemada
Found the cat in the larder
He relinquished it without a qualm *
To the Secular Arm.

* Although its name was Ferdinand.



Among the contemporaries of Shakespeare
There were few who regarded him as Drake's
peer.

Spoiling paper was so much less strain
Than spoiling the Spanish Main.



‘ Tiens ! ’ fit M. Poincaré,
‘ On annonce vingt minutes d’arrêt !
‘ Un coup de vin, qu’il est bon !
‘ Allons ! Garçon ! ’



NB

‘ Sire ! ’ exclaimed Bossuet,
‘ You are behaving in a gross way.’
‘ Still, it’s rather a lark,’
Replied the Grand Monarque.



Henry the Eighth
Took a thuctheththion of mateth.
He inthithted that the moncth
Were a lathy lot of thkunkth.



President Coolidge
Objected to paying muleage
When the people of Nicaragua
Sent him a nice jaguar.



Savonarola
Declined to wear a bowler,
Expressing the view that it was gammon
To talk of serving God and Mammon.



A man in the position
Of the Emperor Domitian
Ought to have thought twice
About being a Monster of Vice.



On one occasion when Browning
Saved a débutante from drowning
She inquired faintly what he meant
By that stuff about good news from Ghent.



Edgar Allan Poe
Was passionately fond of roe.
He always liked to chew some
When writing anything gruesome.



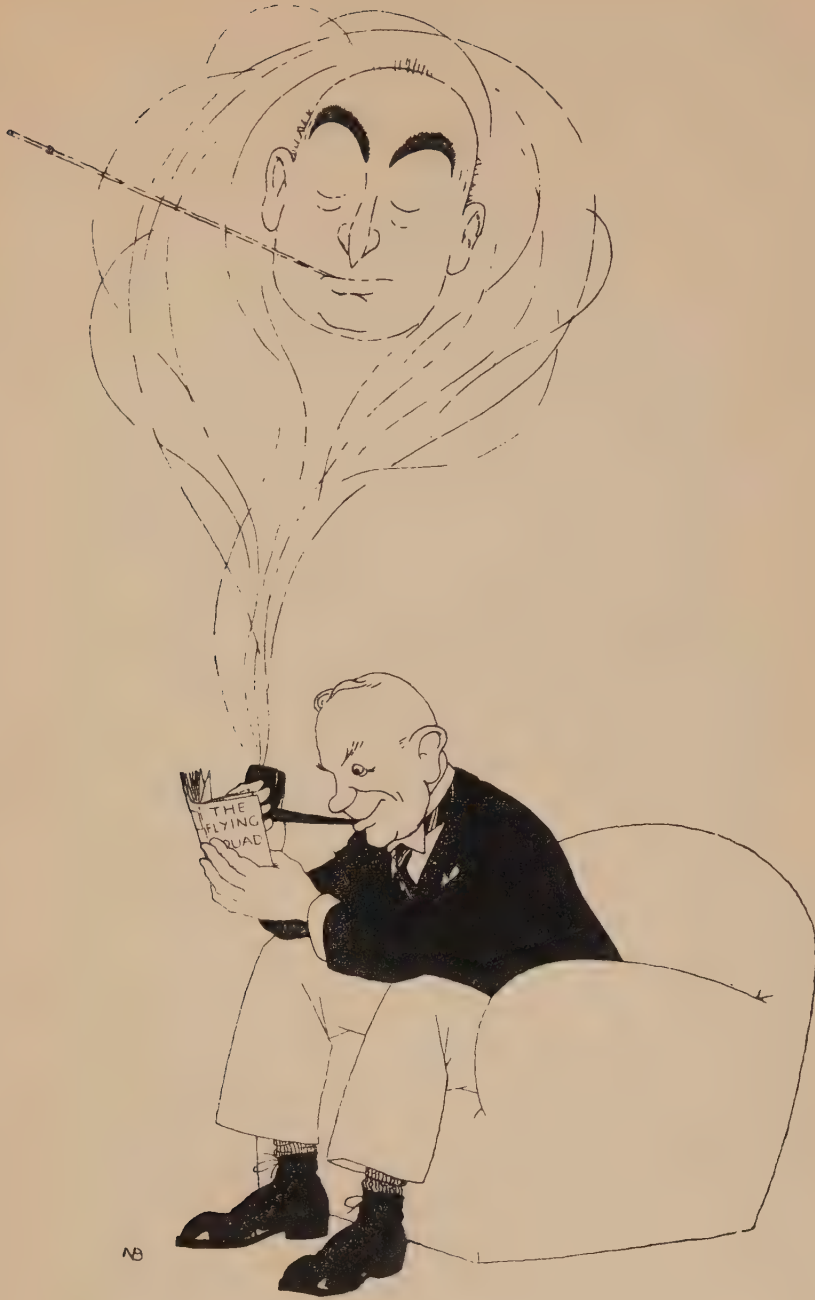
‘ Give me,’ sang Mr. Fox,
‘ To wanton with thy locks.’
‘ That I will never permit !’
Exclaimed Mr. Pitt.



It is curious that Handel
Should always have used a candle.
Men of his stamp
Generally use a lamp.



The works of Edgar Wallace,
Were the unfailing solace
Of a recent Prime Minister
When things were looking sinister.



Sir Robert Peel
Said it was not genteel
But, on the contrary, very rude
To tax the people's food.



Mr. H. G. Wells
Was composed of cells.
He thought the human race
Was a perfect disgrace.



‘ Susaddah ! ’ exclaimed Ibsen,
‘ By dose is turdig cribson !
‘ I’d better dot kiss you.
‘ Atishoo ! Atishoo ! ’



VER

Sir William Joynson-Hicks
Could only count up to six,
Which was rather a wrecker
For his hopes of the Exchequer.*

* Sir William received in 1929 the consolation of a Peerage of the United Kingdom under the name, style, and title of Viscount Brentford, of Newick in the County of Sussex.



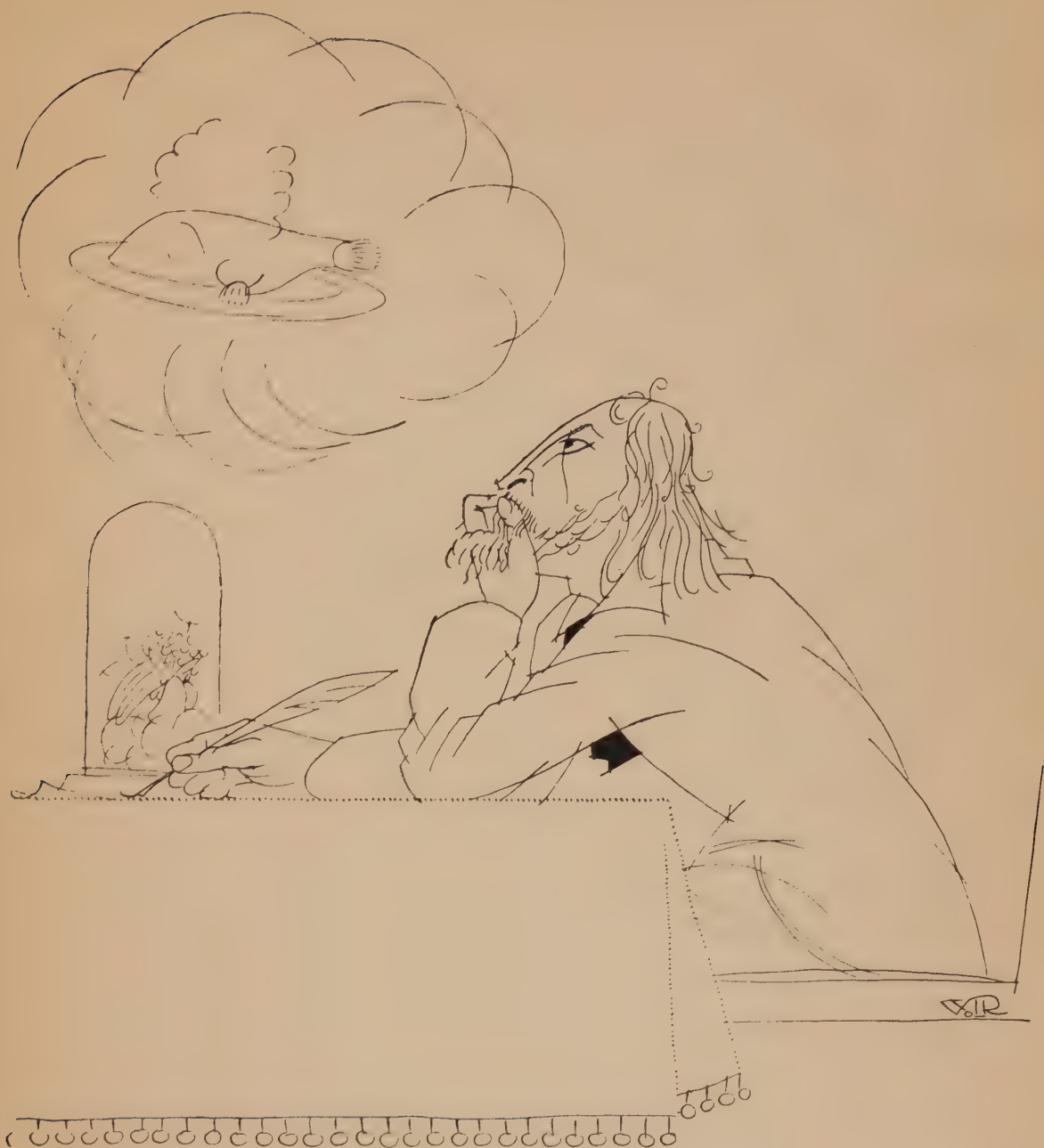
Mr. Philip Snowden
Was rarely mistaken for Woden.
People as a rule were much more
Apt to mistake him for Thor.



It only irritated Brahms
To tickle him under the arms.
What really helped him to compose
Was to be stroked on the nose.



As a young man, Tennyson
Wrote a virelai about venison,
Which falls into the same group
With his sirvente about soup.



‘ I quite realized,’ said Columbus,
‘ That the Earth was not a rhombus,
‘ But I *am* a little annoyed
‘ To find it an oblate spheroid.’



It was a pity about Dickens'
Insane jealousy of chickens,
And one could really almost weep
At his morbid mistrust of sheep.



(81)

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald
Wished the Channel could be tunnelled.
He said it always got his goat
To be asked if he had lunched on the boat.



Although the Dialogues of Plato
Do not actually mention the potato,
They inculcate strongly we should
Seek the Absolute Ideal Good.



Of all sad words of tongue or pen
The saddest are Captain Wedgwood Benn,
Who, waving aloft his gory sabre,
Placed it at the disposal of Labour.



As a laddie, Mrr. Maxton
Was apprenticed tae a saxton.
He thot it wid be prime
To hae Socialism in oor time.



Thomas Carlyle
Suffered with his bile.
He wrote *Sartor Resartus* ;
But that shan't part us.



‘ Dear me ! ’ exclaimed Homer,
‘ What a delicious aroma !
‘ It smells as if a town
‘ Was being burnt down.’



I doubt if King John
Was a *sine quâ non*.
I could rather imagine it
Of any other Plantagenet.



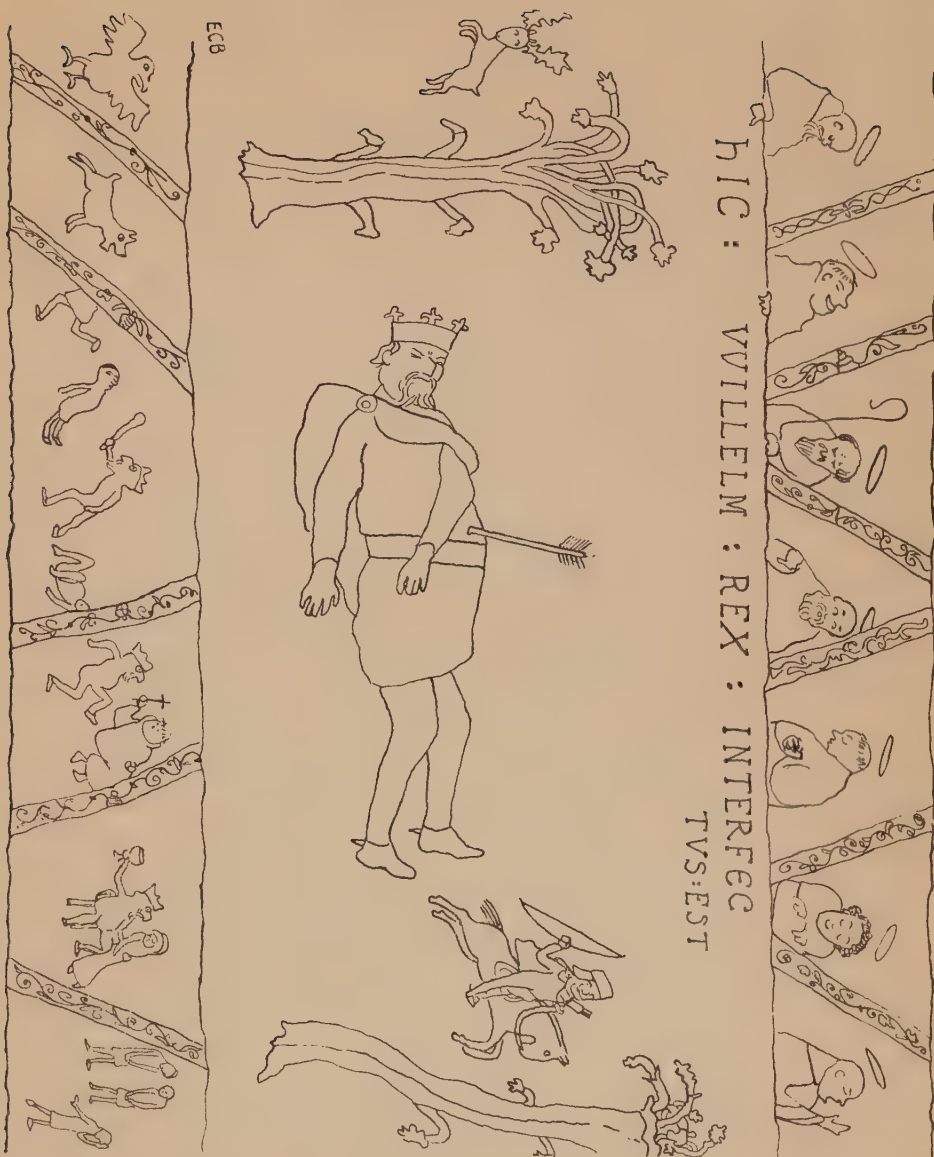
President Hoover
Felt in need of a soother
After his little tiff
With Governor Al Smith.

Adam Smith
Was disowned by all his kith,
But he was backed through thick and thin
By all his kin.



There exists no proof as
To who shot William Rufus,
But shooting him would seem *
To have been quite a sound scheme.

* '*Serviit eo hilariter bene recte.*'—Will. Malmesb., *Gesta Regum*, lib. xiv, § 329. '*Porcus lutulentus id certe poposcit.*'—Eadmer, *Hist. Novorum*, lib. ix, p. 34.



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